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The Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Small Business Development

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¹Entrepreneurs, small business sector, women, gender equality, national economy

Abstract: In this article, the role of women and their share in business, particularly, in small business in Uzbekistan is discussed. Percentages and development of small business sector are shown within the years of 2022-2023.

Key words. Entrepreneurs, small business sector, women, gender equality, national economy.

Introduction. Small business and private entrepreneurship is an important factor in the development of the economy, increasing the employment and income of the population. More than fifty presidential decrees and decisions were adopted in the last two and a half years in order to support the representatives of this field from all sides.

Today, women are employed in almost all sectors of the national economy. In particular, 27.8% of families are employed in agriculture. 19.9% of the total population is employed in the field of education, culture, art, science and scientific services. Also, 13.1% of our women work in trade, catering, manufacturing and supply sectors, 12.6% in health care, physical education and social welfare, and 10.9% in industry.

Analysis. Based on the President's decision, the program "Every family is an entrepreneur" is being implemented in our country, i.e. 150 times the minimum wage for individuals who want to engage in entrepreneurial activities, individual entrepreneurs, micro-firms, small enterprises, farmers and farms, as well as family entrepreneurs who are considered small business entities. - Microloans with an interest rate of 7% per annum for loans up to 1000 times, with a grace period of up to 6 months for a period of no more than 3 years.

This, in turn, serves to increase the activity of women in small business and private entrepreneurship, and according to current statistics, more than 120,000 women in small business and private entrepreneurship, and more than 4,550 women in farms run their own farms. In our opinion, in order to further develop small business and private entrepreneurship, and increase the activity of women in it, special attention should be paid to the following:

First, to effectively use the services of logistics centers in exporting the products of small business entities, that is, to develop the quality of marketing services and thereby ensure the competitiveness of our national products in world markets;

Secondly, entrepreneurs should be given the opportunity to improve public service for the development of exports based on the one-stop shop principle;

Thirdly, it is necessary to stimulate scientific research and innovative activities for entrepreneurship.

It is based on the mutual (corporate) cooperation of the state and private business sectors, that is:

- wide and effective use of scientific achievements;
- application of new innovative technologies in business activities;
- introducing the most modern technologies into production;
- modernization of all branches and sectors of the national economy is of great importance.

Rapid development of small business and private entrepreneurship has become one of the most priority directions of the economic policy of Uzbekistan. As a result of the implemented consistent measures, 48,900 new small enterprises and micro-firms were established in 2022, which is 22,9% more than in 2021. Appropriate conditions have been created in Uzbekistan for raising the position and role of women, ensuring their rights and interests, and increasing their socio-political and economic activity. Currently, if we analyze the economic activity of the world population on the basis of gender relations, the employment of women in labor is increasing more and more.

Discussion. In particular, the procedures for state registration of business activities, obtaining various permits and many other services have been simplified. In order to facilitate this, the State Services Agency and its local centers were established. The position of business ombudsman (business ombudsman) has been introduced.

Reception offices of the Prime Minister were established in all regions, which receive and help resolve businessmen's appeals. Under the Cabinet of Ministers, the activity of the State Fund for the Support of the Development of Entrepreneurship was launched, and 200 billion soums and 50 million dollars were allocated to it.

The volume of loans granted by commercial banks to entrepreneurs has increased.

Such practical measures are paying off. Small business provides almost 60% of the country's gross domestic product, one-third of the volume of industrial products, 98% of agricultural products, and half of investments. In many regions, 70-90 percent of exports fall on small businesses.

In 6 months of this year, the number of business entities increased by 60 thousand.

The head of our state emphasized that regional, district, city mayors and their first deputies should work in a completely new way and spend 70% of their time on developing entrepreneurship in the region.

The task of implementing a new incentive system was to assess the activities of the mayors of each region, district and city and their first deputies based on the number of newly established or revived small enterprises and the number of jobs created in them.

It was determined that the viability indicator of enterprises should be one of the main criteria in the assessment. That is, if at least 50 percent of the enterprises being established work for the next 3 years, additional financial incentives are provided for the mayor and his first deputy for entrepreneurship, heads of regional departments of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Economy and Industry were instructed to implement this new system.

Republican working group headed by the Minister of Economy and Industry needs to develop proposals for small business development based on the potential of each district. On the basis of these proposals, entrepreneurs will be assisted in all matters such as their implementation, credit, allocation of land and buildings, connection to infrastructure.

In 2022, 31,766 new enterprises were implemented in our republic to further improve the business environment, to ensure reliable protection of small business and private entrepreneurship, to provide them with comprehensive support and to eliminate obstacles to their rapid development. It made possible to establish small business entities (except farmers and farms). As a result, the number of small business entities operating as of January 1, 2023 was 218,170 and increased by 11,066 compared to the same period last year.

As a result of creating more favorable conditions for small businesses and private enterprises, according to the preliminary results of January-December 2022, their share in the gross domestic product of our country was 56.9% (56.5% in January-December 2021). in industry - 45.0 percent (40.6 percent), in services - 60.5 percent (57.8 percent), in export - 28.5 percent (27.0 percent) and in employment - 78.1 percent (77.9 percent).

In January-December 2023, small business and private business entities invested 19963.2 billion soums in the economy. This is 40.3% of the total investments in the country. They also completed construction works worth 20,677.7 billion soums (70.7% of the total volume of construction works) or increased by 15.6% compared to the same period last year.

The decrease in the indicators of the business environment is explained by the unfavorable epidemiological situation in the republic. In particular, 17 percent of small and medium business representatives noted the negative impact of the pandemic on the demand for goods/services.

The decline in the current state of business indicator is due to a change in sentiment among entrepreneurs in the industry, agriculture and service sectors, which is mainly due to the extended quarantine restrictions.

Conclusion. To sum up, we believe that it is appropriate to implement the following measures in the use of their labor to widely involve young people in the field of small business and private entrepreneurship:

- introduction of social protection of parents in modern models; - organization of various (privileged) courses and expansion of training centers in order to improve the literacy of people in the field of entrepreneurship;
- use of preferential measures to support working women;
- Conducting separate studies and studying the problems of the system of providing employment to unemployed couples in labor exchanges and improving the employment service on this basis;
- to strengthen the sense of property ownership in order to run individual business activities in rural areas;
- establishment of new workplaces based on the development of home economics and mastering modern industries.

In short, in our country, large-scale work has been carried out to reliably protect the rights and interests of women, to expand their participation in public administration and entrepreneurship, to help bring out their talents and potential, especially to provide women in need with housing and permanent employment. is particularly important.

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